

HOOSIER FOLKLORE BULLETIN

No. 4

Edited by
Herbert Halpert

CONTENTS

Tall Tales and "Sells" from Indiana University Students	
Ernest W. Baughman and Clayton A. Holaday	59
I Tall Tales	59
II Legends.	65
III "Sells".	67
Annual Meeting	71
Editor's Report.	72
Notes.	73
More on "Oregon" Smith	W. H. Jansen 73
Additional Observations on Indiana Place-Names	P. G. Brewster 74
Two Ukranian Endless Tales	H. Halpert 76

December, 1944

TALL TALES AND "SELLS" FROM INDIANA UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

These stories were collected from first year English composition classes by Mr. C.A. Holaday and by me. Since the stories were all written down by students and not recorded from oral dictation, they are of value chiefly for content rather than form or style. The students were all freshmen, with the usual age range one would find in a group of college freshmen. I have given as complete background details as possible, but in some cases the students had left school before I got a chance to check the details. Stories initialed "C. H." were collected from Mr. Holaday's classes, those initialed "E. B.," from mine.

In a few cases I have listed references that I had readily accessible. The Editor of the Bulletin has added supplementary notes and references.

I. TALL TALES1. Killed In The Storm

Contributed to E. B. by John Howard of Wabash, Indiana, September 24, 1942. He heard it from his father.

Outside, snow was covering the ground with its thick blanket of white: the wind was whistling through the trees. Inside, was a warm, glowing fire which crackled cheerfully in defiance of the storm. Sitting about this fire were three old men. The first old man spoke: "Back in the fall of seventy-three," he said, "we had a storm that can't noways near be matched by this one. It were the worst storm ever to hit this part of the country. Tore up everthin' for miles around."

"That ain't nothin!" said the second, leaning back in his chair and clasping his hands behind his head, "why when I was about thirty-five, a storm come through our country that killed seventy-five out of a hundred and fifty people. Yes, by Gadfrey, half of them!"

Just then the third old man who had been sitting quietly in his chair, spoke up. "In nineteen-o-nine," he began, "I lived in the small town of Pennsville, about thirty miles north of here. One day a terrible storm hit. Houses were torn up, trees uprooted, and every person in town but one was killed. His name was Clemuel Prickett."

"But," said the first old man, "that can't be. You said you were there and you're here now."

"I know I'm here now," replied the last old man, "but I'm not alive. I was killed thirty years ago in that storm."

(For the teller killed in his own story compare H. W. Thompson, Body, Boots and Britches, p. 291.—E. B. Add: M. C. Boatright, Tall Tales from Texas, pp. 65-67; B. A. Botkin, A Treasury of American Folklore (New York, c. 1944), p. 565.—Ed.)

2. Liars' Contest: Speed

Contributed to C. H. by George Muller, February 29, 1944. He heard it about five years ago in Fort Wayne, Indiana, when a group of his twelve-year-old buddies were telling tall stories.

Three men were sitting around the table smoking their pipes. They were talking over the experiences they had had in the past. After awhile their stories were beginning to stretch until the tales were almost unbelievable. One old chap said, "You should hear about my hunting trip in Canada. I was in the front yard of my cabin when I noticed a large buck deer standing about thirty yards away. My gun was in the house; so I had to run in and get it. After firing a shot and knowing that I never miss, I laid my gun down and ran up to the buck deer. He was just starting to fall so I caught him in my arms. He made a wonderful dinner."

"Listen Buddy!" replied another, "you ain't got nothin' on me. I was carrying a bucket of water to give to my horses. The bottom of the pail was so rusted that the whole bottom fell out. Due to my quick thinking, I caught it and returned the bottom to the bucket before any water was spilled."

"Tain't nuthin' at all," bragged the third. "My wife wanted some beans for dinner; so I cut down an acre of woods, dug up the stumps, plowed and cultivated the land, planted some bean seeds, and by that noon of the same day we had fresh green beans for dinner."

(Compare: Zora Neale Hurston, Mules and Men, pp. 61-62; A. H. Fausset, "Negro Folk Tales from the South," JAF, XL (1927), 261-62; Halpert ms. from Alabama. — Ed.)

3. A Fish Story

Contributed to C. H. by Norma Spicer, of Columbus, Indiana, November 1, 1943.

I imagine everyone has heard about the stream down in Texas that was so swift that it carried the shadow of a near by tree a hundred yards down the stream.

There was another peculiar thing about that stream. There was a huge fish in it that no one was able to catch. One time a sailor tried. He used an immense hook, and fastened the other end of the line to a fifteen-ton anchor. He sat down on the anchor to wait for the fish to bite. He thought the anchor would hold the fish and then he would have it. But the fish pulled it away so fast that while he was hanging on to the anchor, his clothes caught on fire from the friction of his clothes against the water.

(For swift stream carrying shadow see this Bulletin, I, 97. — E. B. For stories of fish motive power setting clothes on fire, see L. Thomas, Tall Stories, p. 61; E. E. Selby, 100 Goofy Lies (Decatur, Illinois, c. 1939), p. 13. — Ed.)

4. Fishing in Fog

In Texas the fogs are terrible. They are much more dense than they are here. One time the fog got so thick that this big fish swam clear up into my uncle's barn yard before it realized it was on dry land. My uncle invited every one for miles and miles to a fish fry; but when they started to cut up the fish, they found it so full of fish hooks that all they could do with it was to use it for scrap iron.

(For fish caught swimming in fog, see Thomas, pp. 61-62; Selby, p. 23. Prof. Ivan Walton tells another Michigan version of this story. Compare the fish full of hooks with the goose so full of bird shot that it yields no flesh, only eighteen pounds of lead. Joe Allen's Fireside Tales, 2nd ed. (New Bedford, Mass., 1941), pp. 39-40. — Ed.)

5. The Fish That Drowned

Contributed to E. B. by Glenn Simpkins, of Salem, Indiana, April 15, 1943.

The old gentleman told about the time that he went fishing and caught a nice bass. He kept the fish alive after taking it off the hook, and it became attached to him. It started following him everywhere he went; and finally, one day he crossed a small stream on a log, and as the bass was crossing it slipped and fell into the water and drowned.

(For a text and references see this Bulletin, I, 16, and compare I, 64-65. — E. B. Add: Botkin, pp. 624-25; E. Grant and F. I. Maule, The Tame Trout and Other Fairy Tales (Farmington, Maine, 1941), pp. 1-4 and reprinted by S. T. Farquhar in California Folklore Quarterly, III (1944), 177-79. Compare F. H. Hart, The Sazerac Lying Club (San Francisco and New York, 1878), pp. 44-46. — Ed.)

6. The Crows

Contributed to E. B. by Glenn Simpkins, of Salem, Indiana, April 15, 1943.

It is told that they have crows so big down at Salem, Indiana that the people have seen four crows carrying a large cedar tree as they flew through the air.

7. The Intelligent Hunting Dog

Contributed to C. H. by Virginia Tuttle of Bloomington, Indiana, October 26, 1943.

When a group of country men gather together, a contest is soon begun to find out who can tell the tallest tale. The tale given here was told to me by my father, who heard it from his father.

Mr. Brown owned a pointer bird dog. Mr. Jones heard of the outstanding achievements of this dog and called on Mr. Brown for the purpose of buying it. Seeing that the dog responded well, Mr. Jones asked

to see it in action. Mr. Brown agreed to do this, and the two of them went to get their rifles; then they took the dog to a near by field, and "the hunt was on."

They had scarcely walked five hundred yards when the dog went in- to a perfect point towards some bushes. Mr. Brown fired into the bushes with his rifle, and a wounded quail flew haltingly across the sky and finally fell to earth. When ordered to retrieve the quail, the dog dashed to the spot where it had fallen. The dog soon returned without the bird and gave Mr. Brown a complaining whine. Mr. Brown repeated his command to retrieve the quail; and again the dog disappeared. It was gone such a long while that Mr. Jones began scoffing, saying that it was probably eating the quail at that moment. Mr. Brown and Mr. Jones decided to investigate. They found the dog diving into a pond. Mr. Jones was more certain than ever of the dog's uselessness and told Mr. Brown so.

But, having faith in the dog, Mr. Brown reassured Mr. Jones. Finally, the dog crawled out of the pond carrying a fish in his mouth. Mr. Jones, now certain that the dog was no good, told Mr. Brown he wouldn't buy that dog under any circumstances. Mr. Brown simply replied by taking out his pocket knife and cutting the fish open. Inside the fish was the shot quail.

(Compare Thomas, pp. 113-21 for other stories of the remarkable feats of good hunting dogs--Ed.)

8. The Intelligent Water Dog

Contributed to E. B. by Virginia Charlton, April 15, 1943. She heard it from her father, now of Indianapolis, Indiana.

A man owned a water spaniel, and he took the dog with him on all occasions. One day a friend found him sitting on the bank fishing with his ever faithful pooch by his side. The friend asked him why he brought the dog fishing. The man replied that the dog was a water spaniel and always pointed when a fish came near the hook.

9. The Shadow

Contributed to E. B. by Virginia Charlton, April 15, 1943.

My father also tells about an old house in the neighborhood in which there was an ancient grandfather's clock. It had run so long the shadow of the swinging pendulum had made a hole in the wall.

(For other unusual shadows see No. 3 of this collection, and note; Thompson, p. 140, the story of Bill Greenfield's scythe which was so sharp that on a bright day its shadow would cut the blades of grass.--E. B. See Burlington Liars' Club, The 25 Best Lies of 1933 (Burlington, Wisconsin, c. 1934), p. [3], and reprinted in "Champion Tall Tales," Reader's Digest, XLIV (March, 1944); 106.--Ed.).

10. Frozen Sunshine

Contributed to E. B. by Virginia Charlton, April 15, as told to her by father.

It gets so cold in Minnesota at times that amazing things happen. One day it was so cold, the sunshine froze on the sidewalk and they had daylight all night.

(See Thomas, p. 197; Selby, p. 14.--Ed.)

11. Peg-legged Cat

Contributed to E. B. by Garland Haas, of Evansville, Indiana, May 12, 1943. He heard it while he was in the Navy two years ago on shipboard in the Pacific.

Granpop spit. His pale blue eyes sparkled and his snowy white beard jerked as he chuckled under his breath. Everyone settled down for a yarn that was sure to come.

"Speakin' of cats," he said, and of course none of us was speaking of cats. That was his way of starting on his favorite subjects: cats and lies.

"Speakin' of cats," he began again, "the smartest cat I ever saw was one that we had on the old Tuscarora out in China. This cat, Boats was his name, was awful fond of a Chinese drink called Cooliehou, and he used to come around every hour for a swig; but he always paid for every drink he got. Every time he came for a shot, he brought a dead rat. I suspect he brought about fifteen rats a day, and he always got his drink.

"One day that danged cat got mixed up with a block and tackle and ended up with his fool leg cut off and all his teeth broken out. It sure looked like the end of Boats' rat catching and liquor drinking, 'cause with only three legs he just couldn't catch them, and the ones he did catch he couldn't kill because he had no teeth.

"Well, one day Chips, the ship's carpenter, whittled him a wooden leg, and with a little string and glue we fixed him up almost as good as new. Next morning at chow time there was old Boats with three of the biggest, fattest deadeast rats you ever saw, begging for his drink. Well, sir, that kept up all day; every few minutes he would be back for another drink, and he always had his payment with him.

"Finally I got curious and I followed that peg-legged cat down into his favorite hunting ground in the after hold; where I watched him from behind a crate. It was easy. He just clumped up to a rat hole, made a noise like a piece of cheese, and when the rats came out to investigate, he hit them over the head with his wooden leg.

"Yes, sir. That was some cat!"

to see it in action. Mr. Brown agreed to do this, and the two of them went to get their rifles; then they took the dog to a near by field, and "the hunt was on."

They had scarcely walked five hundred yards when the dog went in to a perfect point towards some bushes. Mr. Brown fired into the bushes with his rifle, and a wounded quail flew haltingly across the sky and finally fell to earth. When ordered to retrieve the quail, the dog dashed to the spot where it had fallen. The dog soon returned without the bird and gave Mr. Brown a complaining whine. Mr. Brown repeated his command to retrieve the quail; and again the dog disappeared. It was gone such a long while that Mr. Jones began scoffing, saying that it was probably eating the quail at that moment. Mr. Brown and Mr. Jones decided to investigate. They found the dog diving into a pond. Mr. Jones was more certain than ever of the dog's uselessness and told Mr. Brown so.

But, having faith in the dog, Mr. Brown reassured Mr. Jones. Finally, the dog crawled out of the pond carrying a fish in his mouth. Mr. Jones, now certain that the dog was no good, told Mr. Brown he wouldn't buy that dog under any circumstances. Mr. Brown simply replied by taking out his pocket knife and cutting the fish open. Inside the fish was the shot quail.

(Compare Thomas, pp. 113-21 for other stories of the remarkable feats of good hunting dogs--Ed.)

8. The Intelligent Water Dog

Contributed to E. B. by Virginia Charlton, April 15, 1943. She heard it from her father, now of Indianapolis, Indiana.

A man owned a water spaniel, and he took the dog with him on all occasions. One day a friend found him sitting on the bank fishing with his ever faithful pooch by his side. The friend asked him why he brought the dog fishing. The man replied that the dog was a water spaniel and always pointed when a fish came near the hook.

9. The Shadow

Contributed to E. B. by Virginia Charlton, April 15, 1943.

My father also tells about an old house in the neighborhood in which there was an ancient grandfather's clock. It had run so long the shadow of the swinging pendulum had made a hole in the wall.

(For other unusual shadows see No. 3 of this collection, and note; Thompson, p. 140, the story of Bill Greenfield's scythe which was so sharp that on a bright day its shadow would cut the blades of grass.--E. B. See Burlington Liars' Club, The 25 Best Lies of 1933 (Burlington, Wisconsin, c. 1934), p. [3], and reprinted in "Champion Tall Tales," Reader's Digest, XLIV (March, 1944), 106.--Ed.).

10. Frozen Sunshine

Contributed to E. B. by Virginia Charlton, April 15, as told to her by father.

It gets so cold in Minnesota at times that amazing things happen. One day it was so cold, the sunshine froze on the sidewalk and they had daylight all night.

(See Thomas, p. 197; Selby, p. 14.--Ed.)

11. Peg-legged Cat

Contributed to E. B. by Garland Haas, of Evansville, Indiana, May 12, 1943. He heard it while he was in the Navy two years ago on shipboard in the Pacific.

Granpop spit. His pale blue eyes sparkled and his snowy white beard jerked as he chuckled under his breath. Everyone settled down for a yarn that was sure to come.

"Speakin' of cats," he said, and of course none of us was speaking of cats. That was his way of starting on his favorite subjects: cats and lies.

"Speakin' of cats," he began again, "the smartest cat I ever saw was one that we had on the old Tuscarora out in China. This cat, Boats was his name, was awful fond of a Chinese drink called Cooliehou, and he used to come around every hour for a swig; but he always paid for every drink he got. Every time he came for a shot, he brought a dead rat. I suspect he brought about fifteen rats a day, and he always got his drink.

"One day that danged cat got mixed up with a block and tackle and ended up with his fool leg cut off and all his teeth broken out. It sure looked like the end of Boats' rat catching and liquor drinking, 'cause with only three legs he just couldn't catch them, and the ones he did catch he couldn't kill because he had no teeth.

"Well, one day Chips, the ship's carpenter, whittled him a wooden leg, and with a little string and glue we fixed him up almost as good as new. Next morning at chow time there was old Boats with three of the biggest, fattest, deadliest rats you ever saw, begging for his drink. Well, sir, that kept up all day; every few minutes he would be back for another drink, and he always had his payment with him.

"Finally I got curious and I followed that peg-legged cat down into his favorite hunting ground in the after hold; where I watched him from behind a crate. It was easy. He just clumped up to a rat hole, made a noise like a piece of cheese, and when the rats came out to investigate, he hit them over the head with his wooden leg.

"Yes, sir. That was some cat!"

(See Thomas, pp. 14-15; Burlington Liars' Club, p. [2]; Selby, p. 6; B. Davidson, Tall Tales They Tell In The Services (New York, 1943), p. 44. Compare J. Blackley, Tall Tales (Franklin, Ohio and Denver, Colorado, c. 1936) pp. 30-31. For other stories of that remarkable naval craft, the Tuscarora, see: Davidson, pp. 71-73; "Tall Tales the Service Men Spin," Reader's Digest XLII (January, 1943), 73-74.—Ed.)

12. Tough Pig

Contributed to E. B. By Carroll Patterson, Loogootee, Indiana, April 18, 1944. He heard the story while working in a factory.

I only tell my story to prove that my father has the toughest pig that ever lived. One day my father and I were blowing out some stumps on our farm. We had our dynamite in a small pile, and our pig came along and ate sixteen sticks of the explosive. After eating his meal, the pig acted very happy and went swaying off through the barnyard. While going through the barnyard, the pig had to pass our very emotional mule. As a rule our mule is a very pleasant fellow, but on this particular day he was very unhappy about something; so he very thoughtlessly kicked the poor pig. It would be hard for anyone to imagine the terrible explosion that followed. The sinful mule was blown across a river which was almost a mile away, our new barn was demolished so badly that there was not enough wood to start a small fire, and our house was shaken so much that the insurance company now refuses to sell us any insurance until we rebuild. And the funny thing is that our pig felt no ill effects from the explosion. I must admit that our pig was ill for a few days, but my father says the illness was caused by the excitement and not the disaster.

(See Thomas, p. 12; O. C. Hulett, Now I'll Tell One (Chicago, c. 1935), pp. 78-79; Selby, p. 9; C. F. Arrowood, "There's a Geography of Humorous Anecdotes," PTFLS XV (1939), 80-81.—Ed.)

13. The Durable Watch

Contributed to E. B. by Julian McConnel of Solsberry, Indiana (near Bloomington), September 10, 1942, as a family story.

"Say, Zeb! I just found that old silver watch I lost last fall when I was huntin' rabbits down in the lower pasture," related old Uncle Spud at the community picnic last week.

"Oh, you mean that big watch your pap got you when you was gittin' married?" replied Zeb.

"Yep. That's the one, and guess where I found it. You know, we've had a sick cow most o' the winter. Well, the doc said there was somethin' caught in the bottom o' her throat; so he up and operates on the pore old soul, and do you know what? That's where he found my old watch! Believe it or not, that watch was still runnin', and I lost it way last fall. The old doc said the cow's Adam's apple had rubbed across the stem of the watch and kept it wound up all winter."

(See this Bulletin I, p. 15; C. Sandburg, The People Yes, p. 89.
—E. B. Add: H. Halpert, "Tales of a Mississippi Soldier," SFQ VIII (1944),
108.—Ed.)

14. Attacked By Indians And Wolves

Contributed to C. H. by Esther Bailey of Greenwood, Indiana, October 26, 1943. She says it is a family story.

My grandfather used to tell me stories about his great-uncle who roamed the hills of Kentucky with Daniel Boone. The one I remember as the most interesting tale of all was the one telling how his uncle was caught in a deserted house by Indians.

Uncle was on a hunting trip somewhere in the hills of Kentucky. As dusk drew near, he accidentally discovered a neglected cabin which had been a temporary home for a family of settlers. He went inside, built a fire in the crude fireplace, and made himself very much at home.

He had been there only a short while when he heard voices and warwhoops in the distance. Realizing that Indians must have seen the smoke from his fire, he climbed the ladder which led from the small kitchen up to the attic.

Soon the Indians swarmed into the cabin and immediately searched the place for trace of the intruder. Fortunately, they overlooked the inconspicuous ladder which led to his hideout.

Gathering from their sounds that they were planning to stay the night, he realized something must be done. Suddenly, however, he heard the howling of advancing wolves which soon surrounded the house. The chant of the Indians became a soft whisper when they became aware of the hungry animals outside.

Uncle realized that this was his chance to get rid of the warriors. He groped around in the attic until he found the long pole that he had seen earlier in the evening. He moved over to the tiny window which was directly above the door of the dwelling and put the pole through the opening to the outside of the cabin. With one mighty shove, he thrust open the door; and the eager wolves charged inside and attacked the Indians. The outnumbered redskins were soon devoured; and the wolves, satisfied only momentarily, left to seek new prey.

My grandfather's uncle went back to the fire and very calmly roasted the deer-leg which he had in his knapsack.

II. LEGENDS

15. The Blood Stain

Contributed to E. B. by William Haney of North Vernon, Indiana, September 10, 1942.

In my community, not many miles from the town in which I live, there stand the remains of an old two-story stone structure. The windows have long since been broken, and the doors have rotted from their hinges. Although sagging deplorably, a part of the roof still remains; of the other part there seems to be no trace. The house itself is situated on the top of a high knoll and is surrounded by a low stone wall approximately three feet in height, which seems to be in fairly good condition. To all outward appearances this seems to be merely another old, ramshackle, deserted building, but let me tell you the legend connected with it that gives it an individuality of its own.

As the story goes, this house was built some sixty or seventy years ago by a newly married couple. After residing there peacefully for several months, they were known by the surrounding folk to indulge in frequent quarrels. To make the story short, one night a near by neighbor was awakened by the sound of a gunshot, followed by a particularly violent scream of agony. This in turn was followed by another loud report. Realizing that something was amiss, the neighbor decided he had better investigate; so, hastily donning his clothes, he rushed over to the house. Upon entering, he found it strangely quiet. Hurrying upstairs to a room, out of which reflected the glow of a candle, he came upon a ghastly sight. There in the middle of the room, sprawled in a pool of their own blood, lay the man and woman who had lived in the house. Between them lay a revolver. Apparently the man had shot the wife and then, realizing the terrible crime he had committed, killed himself. The coroner, after being summoned, returned the same verdict.

For many years after that the house stood vacant, until a relative, who had inherited the property, decided he would clean it up and rent it. He succeeded in cleaning it all except the upstairs room, in which the large blood stain on the floor defied all efforts to remove it. Nevertheless, it was rented, after considerable difficulty, to a middle-aged couple with several children. After living there for several weeks, they moved out, explaining to the landlord that during the night the scent of blood became so strong that it was unbearable. They also stated that they had attempted, without success, to remove the stain from the floor of that particular room. The building was later rented to several others, all of whom vacated it with the same excuse, "At night the scent of blood becomes unbearable."

After many other unsuccessful attempts to rent it, the landlord decided he would dismantle the structure and make some use of the valuable timbers therein; but his task was mysteriously halted when he attempted to remove that part of the roof immediately over the room in which the aforementioned tragedy had occurred. From that day till his death, some five years later, he absolutely refused to discuss the subject or to permit anyone to go near the property.

My grandfather has repeatedly told me this tale, and each time he warns me not to go near the house on the hill. At times I ask him if he is superstitious, but each time he merely smiles and says, "No, I'm not, but I do believe that there are some things that are unfathomable to the human mind."

16. The Legend Of Hezekiah Thomas

Contributed to E. B. by Joseph Peil of South Bend, Indiana, September 17, 1942.

Many years ago, during the time of the great Indian Wars, there lived in the hills of Michigan a hermit named Hezekiah Thomas. Being a strange man, or, as many people put it, completely out of his mind, he ran through the woods and streams in the summertime, wearing nothing but that which God had presented to him at birth. Remaining unclad until the first snow blanketed the already frost-hardened ground, he would then don a sheep-skin suit which he wore until the ice cleared from the near by lakes.

He erected a shrine on the top of a small knoll which was encircled by small willows. There he worshiped the sacred sea lion which supposedly roamed the depths of Cory Lake. This lion, it seems, has been seen many times recently, but strangely enough, only by a few inebriated resorters vacationing near by.

While worshipping at the shrine one evening, a vision came before him. In the vision he was told to gather all the stones he could find out of the big swamp; and, when the blue heron flew over the swamp at full moon, they would turn to gold.

Sitting in the bottom of a hollow log, used as a boat, he paddled around the swamp, gathering all the pebbles that came in sight. He put them in large leather sacks and stored them in the back of his cave.

Each full moon he would watch attentively, but in vain; for the big bird never came.

One morning, after brooding the entire night over his apparent failure, in a fit of rage, he dragged his carefully sought pebbles from his cave and threw them into the lake. A few nights later, while he was hunting frogs in the swamp, a shadow fell across his boat. Looking up he saw, by the light of the full moon, the blue heron gliding slowly over the swamp toward the south.

In a fit of desperation, Hezekiah leaped from the boat and was never seen again.

Whether or not the stones turned to gold no one will ever know. Some say they did; others say they didn't. As for me I don't know.

(Mr. Peil adds that Hezekiah had been run out of a town in Northern Michigan because of his attitude toward summer clothes, and that he spent most of his time on three adjoining lakes, Corey, Harwood, and Kieser. Most of Mr. Peil's information is from an uncle.—E. B.)

III "SELLS"

The following stories are representative of a group of trick stories or "sells" usually based on very outrageous puns. Such stories were very much in vogue a few years ago, especially nos. 19 and 20.

They are worth reproducing to show contemporary narrative trends.--Ed.

17. The Lion And The Mouse

Contributed to E. B. by Barbara Null of Muncie, Indiana, April 15, 1943. Miss Null did not remember when she had heard the story, but she had heard it at Indiana University. It was also a familiar story to several other members of the class. Two girls, Ruth Gearhart and Mary Jean Dawson had heard the same story told about the elephant and the mouse.

One fine day a lion was strutting through the forest when he suddenly came onto a small pool. Noticing his reflection in the unrippled surface, he stopped to admire himself. Being a vain animal, he decided to find out why the other animals were not as beautiful as he.

First he saw a giraffe and asked him why he was not as big, strong, and beautiful as he. The giraffe couldn't answer, but merely shrugged his shoulders and walked on.

Next the lion saw a bear and inquired, "Why aren't you as big and brave and beautiful as I am?" The bear answered, "I don't know," and went on.

Then the lion met a hippopotamus and asked him the same question. The hippopotamus also replied, "I don't know."

Next the lion met a mouse and asked him, "Why aren't you big and brave and beautiful like me?"

The mouse looked up at the lion and said, "I've been sick."

18. Surprise

Contributed to E. B. by Tom Baker, who writes: "I heard the story from my grandfather at a family reunion in Morganfield, Kentucky, in 1942.

As we were coming from the show one night, we saw George sitting in front of the soda shop all out of breath and sweating like a panther. He had a tired look on his face and appeared to have been running for quite some time. When we walked over to him and asked him what was wrong, he told us the following story:

I was walking past the insane asylum just about a half hour ago and just as I passed the gate, a horrible looking maniac with a long knife in his hand jumped out in front of me. Of course I was scared, and I wasted no time in starting to run. I don't know how far or how fast I ran, but I was able to keep away from him for a few minutes. My strength began giving out, but he kept right on coming. He was gaining ground on me, and every once in a while he would wave his knife in the air and let out a horrible scream. He was not more than ten feet behind me, when a large rock caused me to stumble. Like a flash, a million thoughts ran through my mind about what he might do to me. He reached down to the ground and grasped me by the neck. The next thing I knew I was standing up, looking directly into his eyes. He looked at me for a minute and then tapped me on the shoulder

68.

and said, "Tag, you rascal."

19. The Walking Coffin

Contributed to C. H. by Dorothy Richards, February 29, 1944. She heard it about two weeks earlier, from Gordon E. Cole, aged 20, of Aurora, Illinois, who was in the A.S.T.P. program at Indiana University.

Once upon a time there was a middle-aged man who lived all by himself in a large city. His name was Jake Smith. Jake was very lonesome because his wife was dead and he had no children.

One night Jake was so lonely that he went out and got drunk. There was not a star in the sky, and the wind whistled through the trees. About midnight Jake came wobbling home. He was having a terrible time trying to walk. His house was one of three which were exactly alike; but, strange as it may seem, Jake chose the right house and began to stagger up the sidewalk toward the house. All of a sudden he became aware of something following him. He turned around quickly, and there was a white coffin slowly bouncing along behind him. He was so frightened that he immediately became sober and ran up the porch steps as fast as he could. He looked around and the coffin was slowly turning in the gate and was coming up the sidewalk. Jake fumbled among his keys until he finally found the right one. He unlocked the door, rushed inside, locked it. He looked out the window and saw the coffin slowly advance up the porch steps. It paused a little in front of the door; and then with a horrible crash, it came right through the door and into the living room. Jake scampered up the stairway leading to the second floor. As soon as he reached the top step, he turned around and saw the coffin slowly bumping across the living room toward the stairway. Just as the coffin started to go up the first step, something seemed to stop it. It tried several times to go up that first step but each time it fell back down again. Jake was holding his breath because he knew if the coffin got up those steps he would be a goner. He picked up a chair and threw it at the coffin. Just before the chair reached the coffin, something seemed to reach out and knock it away. The chair fell on the floor and broke into many pieces. The coffin was then free to move and slowly began to creep up the steps. All at once a great idea struck Jake. He hurried into his bedroom, opened the top drawer of his bureau and took out a small square box. Then he ran back to the head of the stairway, and the coffin was halfway up the stairs. Quickly he opened the small box, took out a cough drop, threw it at the coffin, and the coffin stopped.

20. Raps

Contributed to C. H. by Jack Goldman of Evansville, Indiana, February 24, 1944. He heard it about four years ago from a friend in Evansville.

Albert Varney was walking down Third Street, out towards the country. Albert often had spells such as he was experiencing now. He seemed to crave fresh air and felt like being alone. As he was walking along and thinking, Albert suddenly realized that it was going to rain. Not knowing whether to return to his home or not, he looked around for a possible place of shelter. All he could see was an old dilapidated house that was obviously vacant. Seeing that it was vacant, Albert immediately started to walk over

that way.

Upon reaching the porch, he could easily see that the house was in a very poor condition. Albert then entered the house and was shocked at the appearance of the inside. Everything was in shambles, and the musty air offered him little welcome. Then, with a flash of lightning, and a bolt of thunder, the storm was upon him. Albert realized that it was too late to leave the old house. Fully reconciled to his plight, he waited for the storm to subside. Albert then heard a strange noise, a noise that sounded much like a rap. The rapping seemed to come from a near by closet. Albert went over and opened the closet door—nothing there. The noise grew louder, and it gave him a very empty feeling. Albert then realized that he would never be content until he found the source of the rapping sound, which was steadily growing louder. He followed the sound which led him into another room. The darkness was now rapidly approaching, and Albert suddenly realized that he was without source of light. As the rapping grew louder, his efforts to find the ungodly noise became more frantic. He now decided that the terrible rapping sound must be coming from a small trunk situated at the end of the room. Walking breathlessly over to the trunk, Albert fiendishly groped for the lock. Then a sudden numbness developed throughout his body. It was now very obvious that this rapping sound was coming from the inside of the trunk. Getting up enough nerve to open the trunk was a different matter. Albert's curiosity soon overcame his fear, and he suddenly jerked open the trunk. Then he saw what was making the rapping noise. The awful sound was made by wrapping paper.

21. Answering The Tourist

Contributed to E. B. by Marion Lower of South Bend, Indiana, April 16, 1943.

There is one story which is a favorite of an uncle of mine. If you have ever been in Italy, you have undoubtedly heard this story before, for most Italians are quite proud of it.

A group of American travelers were sightseeing in the mountains of Italy. Their guide, who was an enthusiastic fellow, was determined to show them all the wonders of his country.

One morning very early, when the Americans would have preferred to remain in bed, he awakened them and insisted that they accompany him on a journey to a famous volcano near by. When all were staring down at the roaring fire, the Italian asked their opinions. One of the party exclaimed excitedly, "Why, it looks like Hell!"

The guide's only reply was, "My, you Americans have been everywhere."

(Other members of the class knew the story, both in this form and the one in which the guide asked whether America had a wonder to match the grandeur of the volcano. To this question one tobacco-chewing tourist remarked that, "Niagra Falls would put that thing out in five minutes." There must be hundreds of uncollected "tourist stories" which someone could work on.--E. B.)

Indiana University

Ernest W. Baughman and Clayton A. Holaday

(This amusing and varied group of tales supplements previous Indiana University student folktale collections which have appeared in the Bulletin I, 3-34, 85-97; II, 9-10. Together they demonstrate that Indiana is far richer in folklore than has been realized and that students with proper guidance make excellent amateur folklorists. Such collections as this and the ones enumerated above, together with Miss Sweeney's collection in the September issue of the Bulletin should act as an incentive to our members to continue the garnering of this rich harvest of tradition.--The Editor)

ANNUAL MEETING

The seventh annual meeting of the Hoosier Folklore Society was held October 26, 1944, at Catherine's Tea Room, in Indianapolis, Indiana, at 5:30 P. M.

The business meeting began at 5:30 P. M. In it Dr. Stith Thompson discussed the desirability of improving the format of the Hoosier Folklore Bulletin and the possibility of issuing a printed publication with a view to expanding the scope of the Bulletin, making it a regional rather than a state magazine. Discussion by the members indicated an interest in such an expansion, and the president of the society was directed to investigate the problems thoroughly.

In presenting the slate of nominees for the coming year, Dr. Thompson explained that the present duties of Lieutenant Herbert Halpert had made necessary his resignation as editor of the Hoosier Folklore Bulletin. The officers elected for 1945 are:

President: William Hugh Jansen, Bloomington
Vice-president: Bjorn Winger, Indianapolis
Secretary and treasurer: Mrs. Ross Hickam, Bloomington
Editor: Ernest W. Baughman, Bloomington.

The members present voted Lieutenant Halpert, editor of the Bulletin since its beginning, a vote of appreciation for his fine work in editing the Bulletin.

After the dinner Professor Stith Thompson extended greetings to the members present and continued the discussion of plans for the further growth of the Hoosier Folklore Bulletin.

Professor William Jansen presented material which he has gathered about the life and stories of "Oregon Smith," a former resident of Bloomington and a colorful tale teller.

Mr. Clayton Holaday read several stories collected from students at Indiana University. Various members recalled other versions of these stories which they had heard.

Professor Harold Whitehall, of Indiana University, gave the main address of the evening. He discussed American dialects: the major dialect areas with their characteristics and the methods of dialect study.

The meeting closed with a vote of thanks for those who had appeared on the program and for all who had aided in arranging for the meeting.

E. W. B.

EDITOR'S REPORT

I resign from the editorship of the Bulletin with real regret, because the association with the members of the Hoosier Folklore Society and our joint product has meant very much to me. However, parental supervision and guidance from a distance is always difficult. There are definite disadvantages to the Society to have its editor revising the manuscript of an issue in the passenger terminal at Whitehorse in the Yukon Territory, or aboard a C-47 crossing the barren wastes between Fairbanks and Nome, Alaska. Then too the Army works in mysterious ways, and with the best of will a wandering lieutenant can't quite keep up with correspondence and deadlines.

My regret in surrendering the Bulletin is considerably lessened by the knowledge that the new editor, Mr. Ernest W. Baughman, is not only willing, but also very much on the Society's home grounds--which is as it should be. Folklore editors, as well as folklore, should have roots. As witnesses to the new editor's capability we have both his active interest in the Society, and his annual contributions to the Bulletin: the notable discovery of Bobby Hayes, a legendary Indiana strong man, his amusing compilation of modern lore in "Little Moron" stories (which Dr. B. A. Botkin has included in A Treasury Of American Folklore), and the fine group of stories which lead off this number of the Bulletin.

A fond parent may be indulged somewhat if he comments pridefully on the child's progress to date. The large number of folktales which have appeared in the Bulletin represent a sum greater than that yet published from any other state, and include not only tall tales, but also a number of American variants of European tales of all types. The Bulletin has not limited itself to the folktale. There have been articles and notes on legends, folk beliefs, witchcraft, place names, riddles, proverbs, children's rhymes and some modern lore. We have had interview material from folk informants to show how they regard the materials of which they are the custodians. Our greatest lack has been in folk song; although we have published song texts, we have not had the facilities to reproduce music.

We have avoided becoming narrowly provincial, and have been hospitable to publishing folklore from neighboring states and the East and West Coasts, as well as from different national and racial groups. This is as it should be. My hope is that the Hoosier Folklore Bulletin will grow in inclusiveness, and in its sphere emphasize that our Democracy prides itself not, as the fascists do, on a mythical racial oneness, but on an understanding and true appreciation of the many cultural strands that make up the rich pattern of life in these United States.

Edmonton, Alberta.
Nov. 29, 1944

Lt. Herbert Halpert

NOTES

MORE ON "OREGON" SMITH

Herewith are a few more details to add to the growing saga of "Oregon" Smith mentioned a few times in the Bulletin and given in much detail by Herbert Halpert and Emma Robinson in their article "'Oregon' Smith, An Indiana Folk Hero," In Southern Folklore Quarterly VI, (1942), pp. 163-68.

In the summer of 1941, accompanied by Carl Carmer, I set out in search of Fred Hoover, who was supposed to know "Oregon" Smith. We were unsuccessful, but later guided by one of Bloomington's elder citizens, I came upon Mr. Hoover, over ninety and passing healthy--except that he was deafer than any post I have ever conversed with. My guide incidentally knew of "Oregon" Smith as a liar and said I was going to the right man to find out about lies--a comment which should be weighed in appraising the following.

In recording this interview, I have attempted to use quotes to indicate where Mr. Hoover had to be prodded. Closing quotes are meant to indicate that the old gentleman had ceased, and that it took a question or two to start him. All that is quoted is as close as I could come to reproducing his words without any knowledge of shorthand. Although his pronunciation was slovenly, Mr. Hoover's grammar was surprisingly accurate, perhaps a reflection of his formal education and considerable informal education.

Yes, Mr. Hoover knew Oregon Smith. "Sure, sure. Oregon Smith was my uncle. He was related somehow." Then followed a long history of Mr. Hoover's involved family, enough to convince a hearer that one might be confused about a member on its fringe. "Anyway we called him Uncle Oregon. Many a time he picked me up and rode me on his wagon. He whipped me too."

"No, Oregon was the only name I knew. It couldn't 've been the real name. Everybody called him that. He lived out on North College Avenue, Bloomington. Had his own house. It's still standing--or used to be. A long, narrow house. Low. I don't know. Maybe it was gray."

"Yes Uncle Oregon told stories. Well, not exactly stories--lies and exaggerations like you know. He come in to town and talk with the boys. They'd say they had something good, and he'd say his was better. He had a team that would pull more than anything, if you'd listen to him."

"No, I don't remember any of the stories. It's a long time ago."

"Once the boys were talking about pumpkins. I heard this myself, just a young man. They said how big their pumpkins was and Uncle Oregon said out on his place he had pumpkins big enough to drive a team of horses and a wagon through--and it loaded. That's the only one I remember. You know that's sorta funny."

"He was called Sassafras too, you know. He made sassafras oil. He was a great one for turning a little money quick."

"No, he never worked a day in his life. Not hard."

"No! (with great emphasis) He was never to Oregon. Just around here."

When did he die?

"I don't know. '87 or '88, right in there."

"Oh, he was pretty old. Yes, he was. He was tall, slim, a sparse man."

Although Mr. Hoover agreed to record some more information about his uncle, several visits brought no fruit, and death has since stopped the old man's voice.

The information here given adds a little to Oregon Smithiana. It gives him another residence, strengthens the story of his selling sassafras oil, adds a new nickname, and attributes one more whopper to his fabrication. At the same time it shows him somewhat further back in time, having him die in 1888 instead of 1904. And it casts further doubt upon his travels. Of course I do not mean that Mr. Hoover was any more trustworthy an informant than those aiding Mr. Halpert. Far from it! What I do mean is that as more of the Oregon Smith legend is brought to the surface, the more contradictions appear and the more he becomes really a folk hero. And this it is that interests me in a character that at the most can have been dead only sixty years.

Indiana University

William Hugh Jansen

(Mr. Baughman writes me that since the above was prepared, Mr Jansen "has been doing some intensive work on 'Oregon' Smith and is finding quite a bit of excellent material." We look forward to seeing his new discoveries in the Bulletin.--The Editor.)

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS ON INDIANA PLACE-NAMES

Anyone who examines a map of Indiana for any considerable length of time will be struck by the fact that in many instances a town-name appears twice, often as many as four or five times. Whether the reason for it is the attractiveness of the name lack of originality, or indifference and carelessness, it is impossible to determine. Whatever the explanation, the number of town-names occurring twice, three times, four times, or five times is surprisingly large--106, to be exact.

Two Towns Use The Same Name

Andersonville	Erie	Martz
Antioch	Fairfield	Maxville
Augusta	Fargo	Milford
Aylesworth	Farmers	Milton
Bethel	Five Points	Monroe
Blackhawk	Foresman	Mt. Auburn
Bloomfield	Franklin	Nashville
Bono	Freedom	Orange
Bridgeport	Geneva	Palestine
Brook	Georgetown	Pennville
Brownstown	Glenwood	Pinhook
Bunker Hill	Graham	Plainfield
Byron	Greenwood	Portland
Carrollton	Hamburg	Pumpkin Center
Charlottesville	Handy	Reed
Clarksville	Hardinsburg	Riley
Colburn	Highland	Riverside
College Corner	Hillsboro	Rockford
Cory	Hillsdale	Scipio
Craig	Hubbels	Smyrna
Cuba	Huntsville	Southport
Curryville	Judson	Springville
Cypress	Kelso	Stringtown
Dale	Kennedy	Sulphur Springs
Davis	Kirksville	Tremont
Dover	Knox	Vernon
Dundee	Lewisville	Waterloo
Dunkirk	Lexington	West Liberty
Edgewood	Marion	Williams
Ellis	Marshall	Williamsport

Three Towns Use The Same Name

Jamestown	Mt. Pleasant	Uniontown
Klondyke	Needmore	Rosebud
	Wheeling	

Four Towns Use The Same Name

Buena Vista	Middletown	Salem
Hamilton	Millersburg	Summit

Five Towns Use The Same Name

Mechanicsburg

The tendency to use a name several times is evident, too, in the names of townships, as the following list with their counties shows:

Rock Creek Township	(Bartholomew, Carroll, Wells)
Sugar Creek	" (Boone, Clinton, Hancock, Parke, Shelby, Vigo)
Deer Creek	" (Carroll, Cass, Miami)
Salt Creek	" (Decatur, Franklin, Jackson, Monroe)
Sand Creek	" (Decatur, Jennings)
Fall Creek	" (Hamilton, Henry, Madison)
Stony Creek	" (Henry, Madison, Randolph)
Indian Creek	" (Lawrence, Pulaski)
Pipe Creek	" (Madison, Miami)
Otter Creek	" (Ripley, Vigo)
Honey Creek	" (Vigo, White)

Incidentally, a "creek" name for a township is very common. There are, in addition to those listed above, Blue Creek (Adams), Cedar Creek (Allen), Haw Creek (Bartholomew), Silver Creek (Clark), Caesar Creek (Dearborn), Mill Creek (Fountain), Beech Creek (Greene), Buck Creek (Hamilton), Rock Creek (Huntington), Bear Creek (Jay), Turkey Creek (Kosciusko), Cedar Creek (Lake), West Creek (Lake), Duck Creek (Madison), Clear Creek (Monroe), Coal Creek (Montgomery), Stampers Creek (Orange), Nettle Creek (Randolph), Lost Creek (Vigo), Big Creek (White), and Thorn Creek (Whitley).

There is a Pigeon township in Warrick and another in Vanderburgh, a Swan township in Noble, an Eagle in Boone, an Eel in Cass, a Raccoon in Parke, and a Beaver in both Newton and Pulaski. Carroll county has a Democrat township, Jefferson county a Republican. Switzerland county has a Cotton township, Wabash county a Paw Paw. Other odd names are Railroad (Starke), Fairplay (Greene), Bigger (Jennings), Northeast and Northwest (Orange), White Post (Pulaski), Aubbeenaubbee (Fulton), and Dick Johnson (Clay). And we must not overlook Crawford county with its Whiskey Run township. The most popular township is Liberty (Crawford, Warren, Wells, White, Delaware, Grant, Hendricks, Henry, Howard, Parke, Porter, St. Joseph, Shelby, Tipton, and Wabash).

Additional odd names not mentioned in my earlier paper are the following: Verne, Willis, Davy, Frances, Noble, Godfrey, Raymond, and Wilhelm; Elk, Phenix, and Pike; Popcorn, Flax, and Lotus. There is a Riley and also a Whitcomb, a Fulton and a Clermont, and Alpha and an Omega. We find also a Plummer and Fawcetts, a Hashtown and an Easytown, Jericho and Egypt, Jockey, Magnet, Daylight, Red Key, Bootjack, White Cloud, and Pilot Knob.

Bloomington, Indiana

Paul G. Brewster

Mr. Brewster's earlier paper on Indiana place-names appeared in the Bulletin, II (1943), 14-16.--The Editor)

TWO UKRAINIAN ENDLESS TALES

At Nome, Alaska, Captain Anatol Rapoport, Air Corps, happened to read an endless tale given in Bulletin, I, 88. It recalled to his mind two tales he used to hear in his childhood in the Ukraine. He said: "In my childhood the serving girls used to tell tales." He had to think of them in Russian

before he could tell them. From his description the first of these is probably a cumulative tale, rather than a "circular" one like the second.

1. The White Cat

"Tell me a story."

"Shall I tell you the story of the white cat?"

"Yes, tell me."

"I shall tell you and you shall tell me: 'Shall I tell you the story of the white cat?'"

"Yes, tell me." (etc.)

--"There is an expression missing; it gets very long. I think there is a version of it in Remizov's collection."

2. A Priest Had A Dog

A priest had a dog

He loved him well.

The dog stole a piece of meat.

He killed him.

He buried him.

Wrote upon the grave:

"A priest had a dog,

He loved him. . ." (etc.)

Hq. Alaskan Division, ATC

Lt. Herbert Halpert